

Amendments to the Drawings/Replacement Drawings:

Submitted herewith are replacement drawings for FIGS. 1-4. Annotated drawings of original FIGS. 3-4, and of previously-submitted (March 8, 2004) replacement drawings for FIGS. 1-4, are submitted herewith to depict the changes to the drawings.

In the current application, the original drawings were filed concurrently with the filing of the application, and a first set of replacement drawings was subsequently filed on March 8, 2004. The currently-submitted replacement drawings include features of the invention that were omitted in the March 8, 2004 replacement drawings, as well as minor corrections (e.g., reference number corrections, dashed-to-solid lines) to the original drawings.

FIGS. 1 and 2 have been amended to include closed “radial sections” which were depicted in the original drawings and described in the original specification. FIG. 1 has also been amended to include the fitting of the proximal stent portion (38) and the proximal portion of the valve assembly (20), which was depicted in the original drawings and described in the original specification.

FIG. 3 has been amended to depict the valve in a cross-sectional view, wherein only the “back” 1/3 section of the valve is depicted in solid lines (as per the original drawing), with dashed lines outlining the front portions of the surrounding stent. The replacement FIG. 3 also depicts the structure from a slightly different angle that more clearly illustrates the stent and valve structure, as per the original FIG. 3. Element reference numbers 72 (valve leaflet closed) and 74 (valve leaflet open), which had been reversed in the original drawing, have now been corrected. Additionally, the valve leaflet in closed configuration (element 72) has been added back into FIG. 3 with dashed lines, as per the original drawing and specification.

FIG. 4 has been amended to include the valve leaflet in the open configuration (element 74), which was included in the original drawing and specification. Also, reference numbers 52 and 74 (which were not in the original drawing of FIG. 4, but were in original FIG. 3) have been added for clarity as well as consistency with FIG. 3. The inclusion of reference numbers 52 and 74 is supported in the original specification, as well as in FIG. 3 in its original and previous forms.

No new matter is added by these amendments to the drawings.

REMARKS

Amendments to the Specification:

By this amendment, paras. [0117] and [0119] have been amended to correct a typographical error, wherein element "52" was inadvertently referred to as element "54."
Paragraph [0118] has been deleted in its entirety.

Amendments to the Claims:

By this amendment, claims 39-42, 47-51, 63-66, and 73 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claim 52 has been amended to correct a typographical error. Claim 74 has been amended to better define the invention claimed. New claims 76-89 have been added. The new claims are supported throughout the specification and drawings. No new matter is added by the amendments.

Amendments to the Drawings:

In amended FIGS. 1-4, corrections have been made to conform with the originally-filed drawings, and to more clearly depict the invention claimed and described.

Response to Restriction Requirement:

On page 2 of the Office action, the Examiner has required a restriction to one of the following inventions under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-38, 42-75, drawn to a prosthetic valve with a stent support
- II. Claims 39-41, drawn to a prosthetic valve conduit

In response to the restriction requirement, Applicant elects Group I for prosecution on the merits. By this amendment, claims 39-41 have also been cancelled.

Response to Species Election

The Examiner has further requested that Applicant elect from the following species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable.

Specie A: Figures 1-2

Specie B: Figures 3-4

Applicant hereby provisionally elects Species A. All pending independent claims (i.e., claims 1, 7, 43, 76, and 83) are readable on the elected species. Additionally, at least the following dependent claims are readable thereon: claims 2-6, 8-18, 20-23, 31-32, 44, 54-5, 59-61, 67, 69-71, and 77-89.

Applicant additionally notes that independent claims 1, 7, and 43 are generic (i.e., all read on both species A and B), as are new independent claims 76 and 83.

Fees Due to File This Amendment

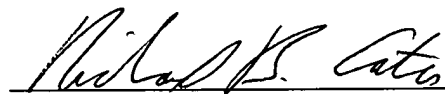
Prior to the pending Office Action, a fee was paid for the original 75 claims, with 5 of them being independent claims. The aforementioned claim additions and cancellations have not resulted in more than the original number of claims, and **thus no claim fees are believed to be due** to file this amendment.

Conclusion

Should the Examiner have any remaining questions, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the attorney of record at the telephone number shown below.

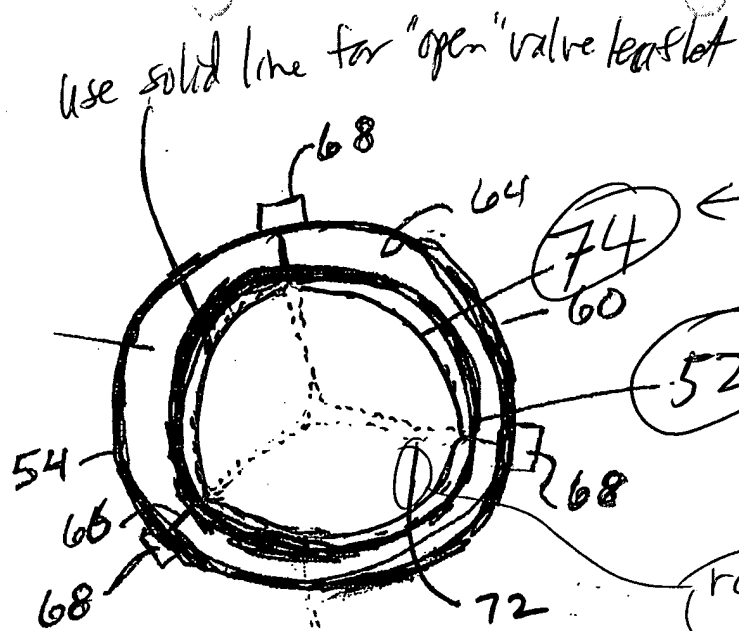
Respectfully submitted,

Date: 3/15/2006



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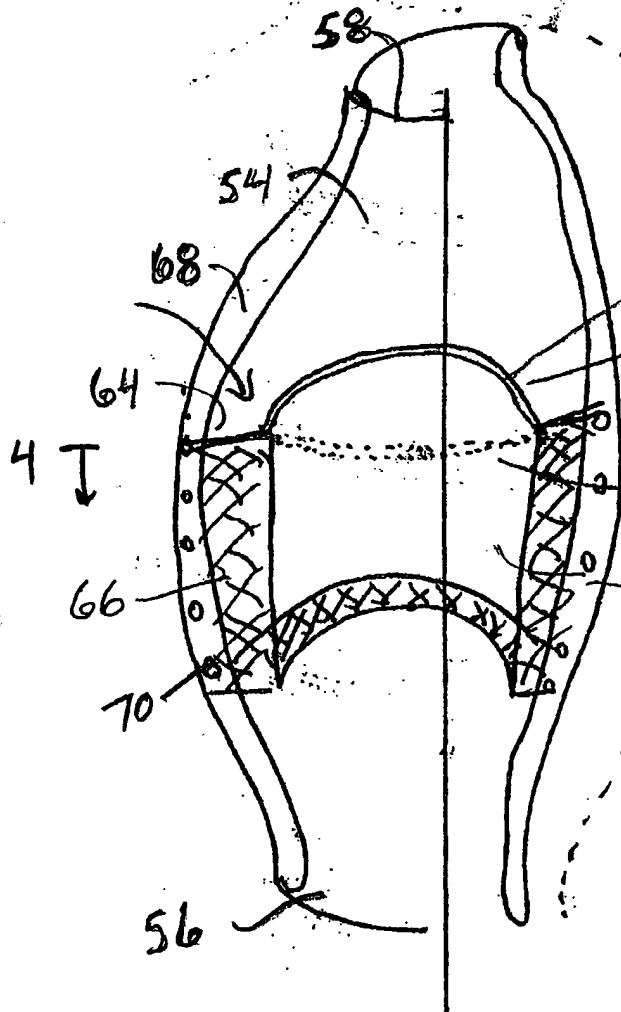
Annotated Sheet
(Original set)



reference nos.
52, 74
added

Fig. 4

reference line 72
extended for clarity



~~74~~
~~72~~

reference
nos. 72, 74
switched

~~74~~
~~72~~

50

Fig. 3



Annotated Sheet (March 8, 2004 set)

212

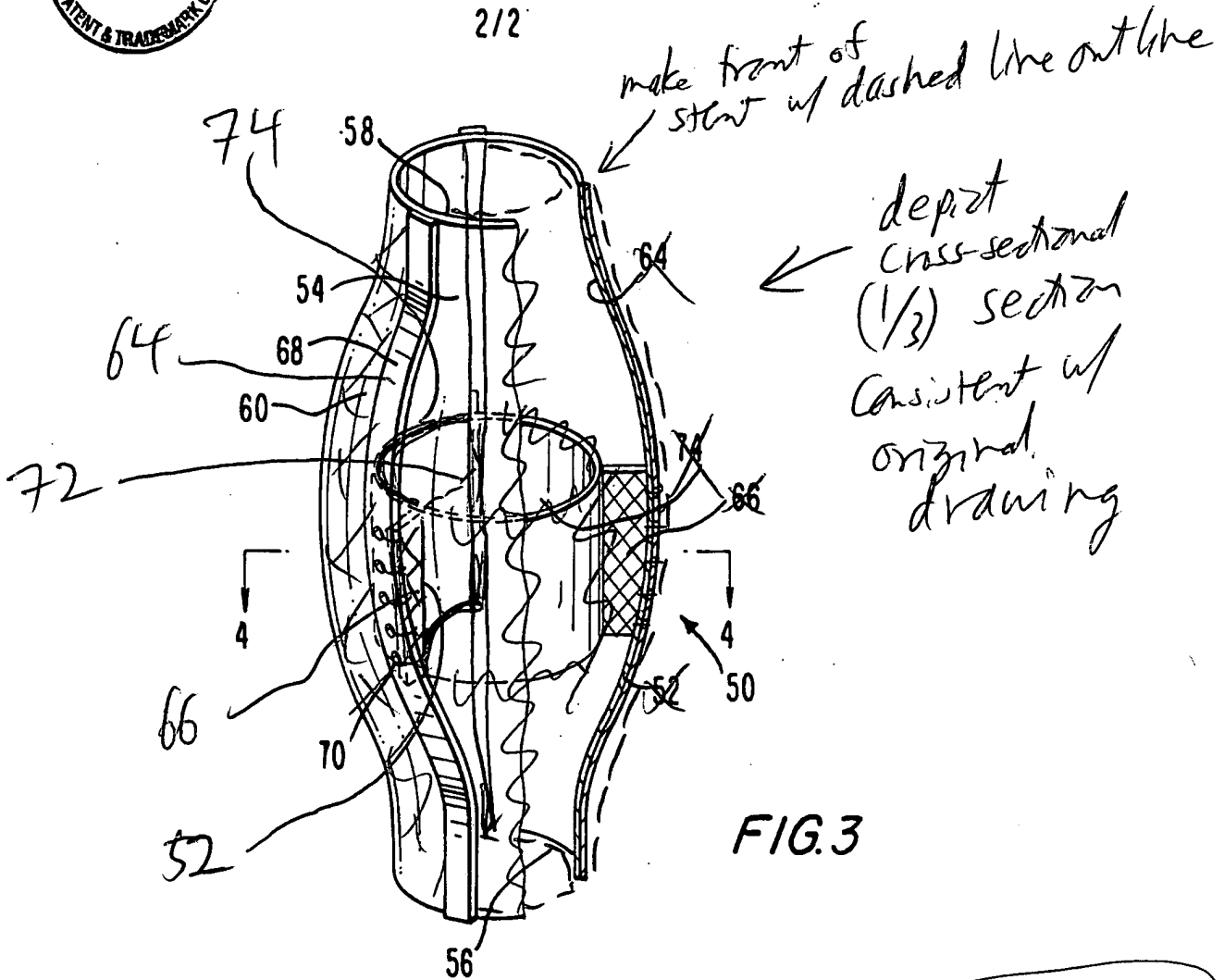


FIG. 3

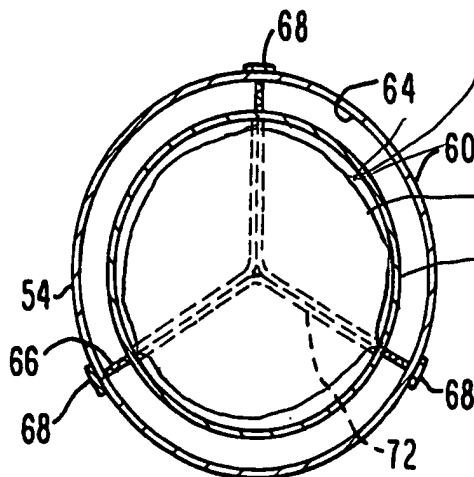


FIG. 4

"open" valve leaflets ~~2/4/06~~
added consistent with
original drawings and
specification.

Ref nos. 52 and
74 added for
clarity &
consistency w/
fig. 4



Annotated Sheet
(March 8, 2004 set)

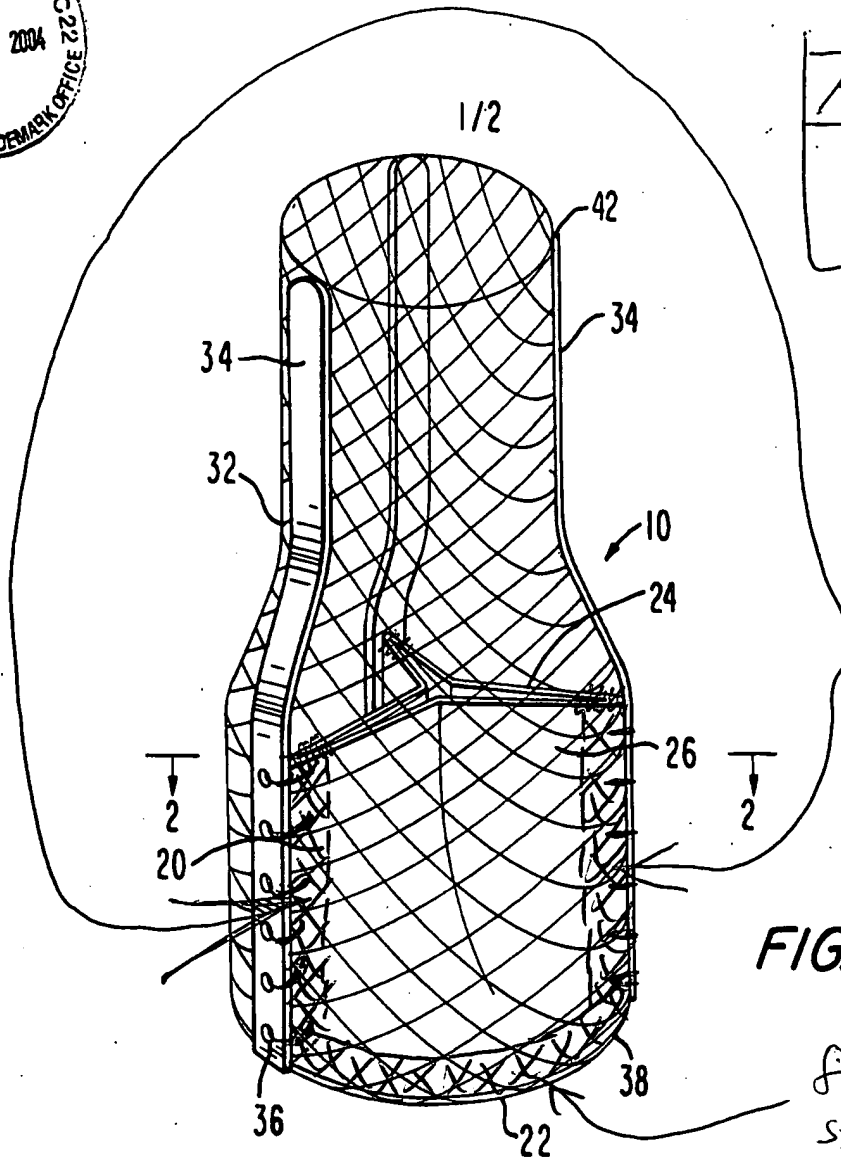


FIG. 1

closed radial sections added
(per original drawings and specification)

fitting of proximal stent portion 38 and proximal portion of valve assembly 20 added per original drawings and specification

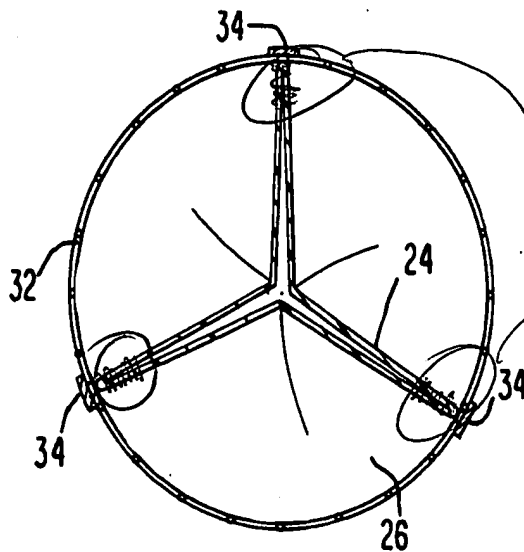


FIG. 2

closed radial sections added
(per original drawings and specification)